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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, the Heavens speak of Your wonders, and the skies declare what You have done. Let Your everlasting grace and compassion encompass our Senators today. Lord, give them such grace that they will be faithful in each task, striving to honor You in their work. May the work they do help provide for the security and well-being of our Nation and world. Protect them and those they love by the power of Your loving providence.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 15, 2013.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable WILLIAM M. COWAN, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. COWAN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m. The Republicans will control the first half, the majority the final half. Following morning business the Senate will resume consideration of the Water Resources Development Act. There will be up to seven rollcall votes to complete action on this bill, and we will start the voting at about 10:30 this morning.

Mr. President, there is a lot going on here—committees meeting—but I want to alert all Senators, Democrats and Republicans, that we have a lot of votes to do and we are not going to wait around while someone strolls in. The first vote will be the regular 15-minute vote, and after that it will be 10 minutes. I am alerting everyone that we are going to close the votes as quickly as we can so we can finish.

The Republicans have an important meeting beginning before 1 p.m. today, so we will move through these votes as quickly as we can.

We also expect votes today on confirmation of Marilyn Tavenner to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and we may get to see if we can finish the Orrick nomination to be a judge for the Northern District of California.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 953

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am told that S. 953 is due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 953) to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to extend the reduced interest rate for undergraduate Federal Direct Stafford Loans, to modify required distribution rules for pension plans, to limit earnings stripping by expatriated entities, to provide for modifications related to the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. I object to any further proceedings on this bill at this time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the great Albert Einstein defined insanity as follows: "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." That is what Albert Einstein said. If his definition is true—and I am not going to argue with Einstein—the House Republicans have truly lost their minds. This week the House of Representatives will vote for the 37th time—the 37th time—on exactly the same thing. What are they voting on? They are voting to repeal the landmark constitutional health care reform bill known now as ObamaCare—and I say that proudly.

After last year's election, Speaker BOEHNER conceded that ObamaCare is here to stay. Here is what he said:

It's pretty clear that the president was re-elected. Obamacare is the law of the land.

I think that is a pretty fair statement. Again, the Speaker said it is pretty clear President Obama was re-elected and ObamaCare is the law of the land. So no matter what he said then, this is now, and he has changed his mind. The House will waste yet another week on another dead-end repeal vote. Perhaps Republicans think the 37th time is the charm, but 37 times on the exact same thing?

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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